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643 796 himself a worthy successor of his great ancestor; Nyikang reappears and goes back to his shrine where he remains until he returns to Akurua.

The concluding ceremonies take place the following day when the chiefs from all over the country gather to do fealty to their new king. The king, seated on the sacred stool of Nyikang, faces the assembled chiefs. Each one comes forward [537] in turn carrying a spear. He makes a speech of praise and exhortation, and at the conclusion drives his spear into the ground to signify that he will never raise it against the king. The king replies briefly to the gathering, thanking the chiefs for their protestations of loyalty and promising to rule justly. [782] After the assembly a bull is sacrificed, and the reth makes a tour of inspection of Fashoda. He pauses outside his father's house, a sheep is stretched out before the threshold, he steps over it and disappears into the interior. He has come into his own.

All over the country there is a general feeling of buoyancy and relief. The shadow is lifted from the land. Nyikang is among his people again . . . long live the king!

643 797 Perhaps I may be pardoned if to this account of the position, the installation and death of the reth, I add a few words on the death of one of the recent kings, Papiti, because of the interest it has for our mission and its work. Papiti must be one of the longest lived of Shilluk kings. The twenty-ninth in succession from Nyikang, he was the son of Yor who had been hanged by the Mahdists in Kodok. He was elected king in 1917, and died in 1943; thus his reign extended over a period of twenty-six years.

From the time of the accession of King Papiti dates the prosperity of the Catholic missions in the Shilluk country, or [798] at least dates the time when they ceased to suffer persecution at the hands of the Shilluk and were permitted to live and do their work in peace, for Papiti had always shown himself a firm friend of the missionaries. He was a frequent visitor to the mission at Lul and often sent presents of hippopotamus fat, a rare delicacy, and butter. It was his authority and good

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*797 others were taken to Omdurman and kept there as prisoners for ten years. The missionaries in Khartoum fled to Cairo, there to await the freeing of the Sudan by Anglo-Egyptian forces.

The revolt was suppressed in 1898, and it was only then that it became possible to carry out Mgr. Comboni's desire. In the beginning of December, 1900, Mgr. Roveggio, with Fathers Tappi and Ortwalder, left Khartoum in the mission boat *Redemptor* to explore the possibilities of founding a mission. They had decided to search in Dinka country, but the boatmen made a mistake and landed them on the Shilluk side of the river. Arriving at Fashoda, they sent a delegation to the king who answered that he would come himself to see them, but in the meantime needed a bottle of brandy as he was not well. When the king finally came on board, Mgr. Roveggio asked his permission to begin a mission among the Shilluk. The king consented and gave them a site at Tonga, far to the south. The missionaries then continued their journey to inspect the place the king had given them, and decided to accept it, but on their return they found that he had changed his mind and now wished them to settle at Lul, not far from his residence, as he thought that it would be more to his advantage to have them near at hand. On February 11th, Fathers Tappi and Huber went to live in the new mission station, the first established among the Shilluk.

*797 The beginnings of the mission were exceedingly difficult. 186 Father Stang explained later: 'The Shilluk always speak ●798 badly of "foreigners", and despise everything which is not Shilluk, and this for two reasons: their pride in their own nation and the great suffering caused them by the Arabs and Mahdists.' The people would not go near the mission, and the old men and women kept away the curious children by telling them that the white men only wanted them as slaves, or would kill them to make poisons out of their blood. On July 7th, 1901, two of the mission huts were set on fire and only the timely arrival of Father Beduschi with supplies on July 24th saved the priests who had been left without shelter and food and tools. Ten years later the same Father wrote:

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'When Father Tappi and I started the first mission among the Shilluk at Lul, they did not want us; they hated us and twice attempted to kill us.' During the first few months the natives twice attempted to take their lives by throwing spears at them. One of their greatest troubles was the learning of the language, a tongue absolutely unknown to Europeans. The Shilluk could not bear the thought that foreigners should learn their language and did all they could to prevent them from doing so. They answered their questions falsely, and laughed scornfully at the attempts of the missionaries to write down the strange words; twice, too, they set fire to their houses so as to destroy their work. With time this difficulty was overcome, but even when the people could understand them they refused to listen to what they had to say. 'How is it possible,' they asked, 'for there to be anything good in heaven? Even the birds come down to eat so as not to die of hunger. We Shilluk are made to eat and dance; you foolish men can have your heaven.' They ran away from men so cruel as to wear on their breasts a cross with a man fixed to it. Alone in their mud huts, often hungry and often ill with malaria, the missionaries had only their faith and their trust in God to keep them at their posts. The health of the laybrothers became seriously impaired and yet not one Shilluk would come to work for them. To add to their troubles, the rains stopped earlier than usual that year and all their crops were ruined; the work they had done was wasted, and they were left even without seed to plant.

Little by little, however, the natives began to approach the mission, first out of curiosity to see the work the white men were doing, and then to beg, whilst the king showed his interest by sending occasionally for a bottle of brandy, some money or some other present. At the same time the missionaries began to gain a reputation as doctors and were thus able to make friends with some of the people and baptise some children before they died. In 1903 the king deigned to visit the mission and stayed the night with the Fathers; he ordered the nearby villagers to send milk and instructed

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Another well-remembered figure is that of Mother Adalgesa who died in 1946 while still in the prime of life. She had been Mother Provincial in this mission for eight years after serving in Uganda for twelve. Her death was brought about by the long hours she spent in the sun treating those who sent for her aid during the epidemic of relapsing fever. She saved many lives and drew many souls to God by her self-sacrificing charity. She died in hospital in Malakal, thanking God that she was able to die in the mission and not in far-off Khartoum. 'It is only right,' she said, 'that I should die here among the Shilluk, since I have given my life for them.' When her body was brought to Lul for burial, the church was crowded with weeping people.

In 1929 the present convent was built, and later the Fathers' house was rebuilt and a school with five classrooms erected.

Other stations than Lul were gradually established as the work among the Shilluk was extended. In 1904 a mission was opened at Tonga, the site originally given by the king. Father Beduschi was the first Superior, but success was very slow, and after ten years or so he went to work in Uganda. It was not until 1923 that a third mission was established, this time near the village of Detwok, from which it takes its name. The funds for its foundation came from a group of Milanese Catholics who wished to assist a mission in Central Africa, preferably among the Shilluk people. Father Beduschi was recalled to become the first Superior of the new foundation; he was well fitted for it, being well acquainted with the language and customs of the people, but having seen the difference between the people in Uganda and the Shilluk he returned to the scene of his former labours very unwillingly and with great misgivings. On his very last day in Tonga a spear had been thrown at him in an attempt on his life. He went with Father Brambilla and a laybrother, Brother Joshua, who had helped him in the foundation of Tonga and had been there since 1904; their first task was to build huts to serve as house, church and school. The same hostility on the part of the natives met them as it had in Lul and Tonga, and

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Father Beduschi wrote that the site of the new mission was unhealthy, and that it had no resources, unless clouds of mosquitoes and flies and armies of white ants could be called resources. As soon as the rains had ended, the new arrivals dug two wells for water, to the amazement of the natives, who could not understand the need for a well when the river was only half a mile away, and who refused to drink the water from the wells, thinking it was bewitched. Father Beduschi managed to gather a few boys together and start a school, but his work was undone by the chiefs, witch doctors, and old people who came and took the children away by force. In other ways, too, ill-luck dogged the new foundation: the few crops they had succeeded in planting in the poor soil failed; the road they had made from the mission to the river was nearly all carried away by floods; a bridge they had built was burned; a great pile of grass gathered for roofing the huts was destroyed by fire.

Father Beduschi had hoped to obtain catechists from Uganda, but when this was found impossible he borrowed some from Lul and sent them into the surrounding villages. He wrote also to the Mother General of the Verona Missionary Sisters asking her to send some Sisters to work in the mission as a present for the Silver Jubilee of his ordination and his coming to Africa. 'Detwok,' he wrote, 'is made up of thorns and crosses; I cannot promise the good Sisters anything but work and trouble; I even promise them disappointments and not consolations, but I do promise them a missionary life, and what more do they desire?' He did not live to see the Sisters arrive, for on November 10th, 1924, he died of blackwater fever, offering his life for the salvation of the Shilluk people. When he was dying, his companion, Father Brambilla, offered up to two shillings for a bottle of milk to give him, but the neighbouring villagers refused to let him have it.

Brother Joshua who was with him both at Tonga and again at the Detwok mission died eventually as a leper. In Tonga he had made friends with a leper in an effort to